

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Protesters in Sri Lanka fight to oust gov't amid social crisis

— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 27 JULY 25, 2022

Constitutional right to freedom of worship is upheld by court

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Two recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions protecting the constitutional right to freedom of worship are good for working people. At the same time, these rulings are attacked by liberals as reactionary and as a further reason why Democrats must win November's elections in order to find a way to take down the court's constitutionalist majority.

On June 21 the court ruled that Maine couldn't exclude religious schools from a state tuition-funding program. Local Maine school districts pay tuition fees for children to attend private schools of their parents' choice in rural areas where there are no public schools. But the state refused to pay these fees when parents chose private schools that are Christian. Two sets of parents sued Maine in 2018.

"A state need not subsidize private education," Chief Justice John Roberts, wrote in the decision, "but once a state decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely

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Back Ukraine independence! Moscow's troops out now!

Working people in Russia find ways to oppose invasion



Feminist Anti-War Resistance

Russian students wore green sashes for high school graduation to show opposition to Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Dressed in black, they used peace sign in place of "O" in date. Those who saw them on street "thanked us for our position." One said he was proud of us, they reported.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Despite significant troop losses and festering disquiet at home, Moscow continues to press its war aimed at conquering Ukraine and crushing its decadeslong battle for independence.

While facing resistance in occupied areas (see article on Mariupol

protest on page 9), Russian forces have suspended ground operations in a new offensive in the Donetsk region, hoping to reinforce their depleted forces after destroying and

Solidarity with workers in Ukraine, Russia! End US sanctions on Russia!

then taking the twin cities of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk. These advances meant Russian control over almost all of Luhansk.

They paid a heavy price in losses of both troops and weaponry, on top of losses and demoralization suffered as they were driven out of Kyiv, Sumy

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Protests in Akron demand the truth about cop killing of Jayland Walker

BY CANDACE WAGNER

AKRON, Ohio — "As a family, we stand for nonviolence, but we encourage protest," Bobby DiCello, the attorney speaking for the family of Jayland Walker, said at a press conference here July 11.

Walker, 25, was gunned down in a hail of 90 bullets fired by eight cops here June 27, after he got out of his car and ran from the cops. Much of this was caught on police body cameras.

"After a weekend of protests and more violence from police, Jayland Walker's family is calling for an immediate end to the aggressive, violent tactics being used by the Akron police against protesters," DiCello said. "They are also calling for

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UAW workers at Case strike for better pay, safer conditions

BY NAOMI CRAINE, JOHN HAWKINS AND LEROY WATSON

BURLINGTON, Iowa — "We're fighting for wages that will keep up with inflation, and better retirement benefits. And they don't want to give that to us," said Gary Binder, a worker at Case New Holland Industrial's plant here July 6.

The 430 members of United Auto Workers Local 807 here, and 600 UAW Local 180 members in Sturtevant, Wisconsin, voted by over 98% to strike if they didn't have an acceptable agreement when their old contract ran out at the end of April. The strike began May 2.

Case New Holland is an international conglomerate that manufactures tractors and earthmoving equipment. The company reported a \$1.76 billion profit in 2021, following an increase in construction projects from federal government infrastructure spending.

"I'm fighting mostly for the new people," Deborah Beelman told the *Militant* on the picket line. "I have 26

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SWP push for ballot in Pennsylvania, 'Militant' renewals off to good start



Militant/Arrin Hawkins

Philadelphia assistant teacher Charde James signed to put SWP candidate Chris Hoeppner on ballot for Congress, bought *Militant* and gave campaign donation to John Staggs, right.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

PHILADELPHIA — The three-week effort to win ballot status for Chris Hoeppner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District, got off to a strong start here July 9-10. Through discussions door to door and at shopping centers,

campaigners introduced the party's program to hundreds of working people. As of July 12 campaigners had gathered 1,039 signatures toward their goal of 2,000, twice the number required.

This response shows the growing openness of workers to learn more

Continued on page 3

Bosses rule through Republicans and Democrats, workers need a labor party

BY TERRY EVANS

President Joseph Biden frequently insists he is "the most pro-union president leading the most pro-union administration in American history." Most top labor officials are missing no opportunity to urge unionists to vote more Democrats into office in November, so Biden can get more "pro-union" and "progressive legislation" through Congress.

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Washington mushroom workers fight for better conditions

Nebraska rail workers rally, say: 'No contract, no peace'

Pathfinder books draw interest at American Library conference

BY MIKE GALATI
AND ELLEN BERMAN

WASHINGTON — Pathfinder Press sales volunteers came from seven cities and towns across North America to staff the Pathfinder booth here at the first in-person American Library Association conference in three years. Almost 14,000 attended the June 24-27 event.

The opening of the conference coincided with the U.S. Supreme Court's handing down its decision finding Roe v. Wade unconstitutional. Discussions about this ruling, what working people are facing today, the place of the fight for women's emancipation, and what the decision meant were widespread at the gathering. A number of participants were attracted

to the Pathfinder display featuring books that offer a class-struggle approach to the fight for women's rights.

Hundreds of librarians were introduced to Pathfinder's books, which present the lessons of revolutionary working-class struggles in works by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin and other Bolshevik revolutionaries, Fidel Castro and other leaders of the Cuban Revolution, as well as leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary working-class fighters such as Malcolm X.

The Pathfinder booth also drew interest from participants who were looking for books that help explain leading political questions of the day — from Moscow's invasion of Ukraine to the fight that overthrew Jim Crow segregation, and the economic and political crisis facing workers worldwide. Among the books that conference-goers picked up addressing these questions were *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes; *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It* by Leon Trotsky; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, also by Barnes; and *Lenin's Final Fight*, which describes his battle to support self-determination for peoples formerly oppressed by the czarist regime against growing reactionary Stalinist pressure.

Over the course of the conference 62 books and 17 single issues of the *Militant* were sold. Fifty-eight conference participants signed interest cards to find out more about Pathfinder



Militant/Ruth Nebbia

Participants in American Library Association conference in Washington, D.C., June 24-27 were attracted to books on revolutionary working-class struggles to order to have in their libraries.

books, many of whom expressed interest in having a volunteer contact them to discuss adding Pathfinder titles to their library's shelves.

The top sellers included *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*, Pathfinder's newest book; *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara; and *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by Barnes.

Some 500 leaflets featuring titles related to Russia's war against Ukrainian independence were distributed.

Pathfinder volunteers also participated in presentations and workshops, including a number of sessions on the right of workers behind bars to get and read literature of their choice, to be part of the world; how to get more books into prison libraries; as well as questions around how to fight efforts to censor or ban books in prisons and schools.

One conference session entitled "Protecting the Right to Read for Incarcerated Individuals" included Reginald Dwayne Betts, a former prisoner who

found reading while in prison and is now a poet and MacArthur Fellow. Betts has started Freedom Reads, a program to get books and micro-libraries into prisons across the country.

Pathfinder volunteers joined discussions in the workshops, telling participants how the *Militant* has fought — and mostly won — battles against efforts by prison authorities to prevent the paper from reaching its subscribers behind bars.

The questions around censorship of books generated some sharp disagreements. In one session, titled "Unite Against Banned Books," panelists Nancy Pearl and writer Jason Reynolds argued that opposing book banning meant just that, *no* books should be banned from libraries, even books they personally objected to, like those that deny the Holocaust happened. This sparked quite a bit of debate, both there and afterward.

Volunteers look forward to following up with librarians and others they met to expand the reach of Pathfinder literature.

Revolutionary Continuity

The Early Years 1848-1917

by Farrell Dobbs

How successive generations of fighters joined in the struggles that shaped the U.S. labor movement, seeking to build a class-conscious revolutionary leadership capable of advancing the interests of workers and small farmers and linking up with fellow toilers worldwide.

1st of 2 vols. \$17

Pathfinderpress.com

THE MILITANT

Hundreds protest soaring prices in Ghana

Government forces fired tear gas and water cannons on workers demanding relief from skyrocketing inflation and new taxes in Ghana, West Africa. The 'Militant' covers and calls for solidarity with working people fighting against boss, government attacks.

BBC/Favour Nunoo

Hundreds protested against sharply rising cost of living in Accra, Ghana, June 28-29.

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The Militant

Vol. 86/No. 27

Closing news date: July 13, 2022

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galsinsky, Emma Johnson, Martin Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in August, one week in September.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

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SWP drives off to good start

Continued from front page

about what the SWP stands for, as well as interest in getting the *Militant* and books on working-class struggles to further their knowledge. As of July 12, 31 *Militant* subscriptions have been sold and 29 books by SWP leaders and other working-class fighters.

“It’s been decades since we’ve been able to be on the ballot in Pennsylvania because of the restrictive laws put in place by the two capitalist parties,” Hoepfner told participants at a July 9 forum here kicking off the July 9-31 campaigning effort.

Also running on the SWP slate in Pennsylvania are Candace Wagner for governor and Osborne Hart for U.S. Senate.

Hart and Lea Sherman, an SWP candidate for Congress from New Jersey, met Darnell Brown, a contract worker for Verizon, while they campaigned at a grocery store. Brown said most Verizon workers are in the Communications Workers of America but like other contract workers he isn’t.

“Bosses are always looking for ways to try and divide us,” Hart said. “Workers need to fight to organize unions.”

Brown told the SWP candidates he was concerned about the devastating impact of Moscow’s war in Ukraine. “Wars are bred by the workings of the capitalist system,” Hart said. “The working class needs its own foreign policy.” The SWP defends Ukraine’s independence, calls for the defeat of Moscow’s invasion and opposes U.S. sanctions on Russia, which fall hardest on working people. Brown signed the petition to place Hoepfner on the ballot and purchased a subscription to the *Militant*.

“Hit hardest by inflation are senior citizens who are on limited income,” Debra Beckey, a retired nurse, told Hart the same day. “We’re not going to get proper nutrition, our prescriptions.”

“We need to fight for cost-of-living

adjustments,” Hart said. “As prices go up, our wages, Social Security, retirement and other income must increase to match. We have to act independently of both the Democrats and Republicans, the parties of big business. We need our own party, a labor party, to act in our own interests.” Beckey wasn’t able to sign the petition because she lives in another district, but she got a *Militant* subscription.

‘Class politics, not ideology’

“Socialist Workers Party members find great interest in discussing not ‘what’s wrong’ — workers know all too well what’s wrong. We discuss *what can be done* about what’s wrong,” John Studer, SWP national campaign director, told those at the campaign forum.

He described openings for workers to use their unions to build support for striking workers, like miners at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama who are fighting attacks on living standards and conditions similar to those faced by millions in the U.S. and around the world.

“What is the working-class road forward on whatever problems we face? That’s the SWP’s starting point,” Studer said. “In contrast, capitalist politicians say the big divide is not between classes, but between ‘liberal vs. conservative,’ or ‘left vs. right.’

“The SWP doesn’t predict what lies ahead for the capitalist economy,” he said. “But we do have a program. For example, we call for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to spread the available work around. Whether we win this fight depends on how strong the working class is.

“What we need is to have our eyes on the need to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class,” he said, “and form our own government, a workers and farmers government.”

Also speaking at the meeting was Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New York. She described the interest in the party at a protest she attended in New York City following the overturn of Roe v. Wade by the U.S. Supreme Court last month. The fight against women’s oppression is “a central question for the working class,” Lobman said, one that



David Johnson, right, renewed his subscription to the *Militant* after meeting in Quebec City with Communist League member Joe Young. “We’re told capitalism is all powerful,” Johnson commented, “but beneath the surface there is a lot of anger and frustration.”

starts from defending workers and our families from the growing hardship imposed on us by the capitalist crisis.

‘Militant’ renewal drive

As part of expanding support for the SWP, party members are involved in a five-week international effort June 25-Aug. 2 to win 300 of those who subscribed to the *Militant* this spring to become long-term readers of the paper. The drive includes selling 300 books on lessons of working-class revolutionary struggles to subscribers.

In Sunnyside, Washington, SWP member Jacob Perasso met with José Martínez, a reader of the paper from five years back. Martínez has worked in a mushroom packing plant for two years and is part of a committee demanding improved conditions and organizing workers there into the United Farm Workers union.

“We do meetings in different places, including in workers’ homes,” he told Perasso. “We tell them, ‘if you’re alone, they can pick you off. But if there’s 10, 20 of us, it’s harder.’”

Martínez renewed his *Militant* subscription and got the Spanish edition of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, an SWP leader who helped lead the strikes and organizing drives in the Midwest that brought hundreds of thousands of drivers into the Teamsters union. He also got the Spanish edition of *Women and Revolution: The Living Example of*

the Cuban Revolution.

“I enjoy being active in the fight for workers’ rights and marching for what we deserve, a better life,” Alicia Hernandez told SWP members Laura Anderson and Chuck Guerra in Miami when they went to visit her in her home. Hernandez, a mother of four children, works cleaning houses. She first met the SWP at the May Day immigrants rights action where she subscribed to the *Militant*.

“They say vote, but there is no one to vote for to change what we face,” she told Anderson and Guerra. “The government does not want us to have an imagination, or think about what is possible.” She was very interested in learning more about the SWP campaign of Rachele Fruit for Florida governor. Hernandez renewed her subscription and purchased the Spanish edition of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

“I like the *Militant* because it tells it like it is about what’s going on here in the U.S. and abroad, and that’s good for anyone with an open mind,” Tammie Madden told SWP members Marklyn Wilson and Lisa Potash, her former co-workers, as they sat down for lunch in Atlanta June 28. Madden is a member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union.

“We discussed the stakes for the working class in winning solidarity for Ukraine’s sovereignty, and the need to defend our families and women’s rights in face of the capitalist crisis,” said Potash, the party’s candidate for U.S. Senate.

Madden renewed her subscription and purchased three books to learn more about the party’s working-class course.

Sales to rail workers

In Minneapolis July 7, SWP members held up a large sign saying, “Rail workers fight for contract and the right to strike! Read the *Militant*,” as they campaigned at a shift change at the BNSF maintenance base.

A dispatcher who got a paper, said, “I am not in the union, but I support you guys.” A number of workers gave the thumbs up as they drove out of the plant. Five copies of the paper were sold. To join the *Militant* renewal campaign and the effort to get the SWP on the ballot in Pennsylvania, contact the nearest SWP branch listed on page 7.

Janet Post contributed to this article.

‘Militant’ Renewal Drive June 25-August 2 (week 2)				
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Book quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Atlanta	18	9	18	8
Chicago	25	7	25	12
Cincinnati	18	8	18	6
Dallas-Ft. Worth	16	15	20	18
Lincoln	5	2	5	3
Los Angeles	25	12	25	10
Miami	7	5	7	2
Minneapolis	16	5	16	3
N. New Jersey	16	5	16	7
New York	25	7	25	3
Oakland	20	10	20	4
Philadelphia	8	1	8	3
Pittsburgh	12	3	12	1
Seattle	16	8	15	9
Washington	13	4	13	4
Total U.S.	240	101	243	93
Prisoners		15		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	12	8	15	8
Manchester	10	3	10	7
Total U.K.	22	11	25	15
Canada	25	9	25	13
New Zealand	5	3	5	0
Australia	7	4	7	1
Total	299	143	305	122
SHOULD BE	300	120	300	120



Darnell Brown, center, talks with Osborne Hart in Philadelphia July 9. Concerned about Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, Brown got *Militant* subscription, signed to put SWP on ballot.

UAW workers strike at Case

Continued from front page
years in. I get a traditional pension. The newer workers just get a 401(k). And there's health insurance. They want to increase the deductible.

"The hours are outrageous," she said. "They have mandatory overtime, 12-hour days. Like they want you to live in here. People have lives too."

Beelman pointed out that the company hired dozens of new workers in the months before the contract expired. "A lot of them came out with us," she said.

One of those is 23-year-old Deiontai Cummings. "I just finished three months on the job as an assembler before the strike," she said. "It's not easy finding a decent-paying job. I've got a 2-year-old son and one on the way. If we win what we're asking for it will put me in a position to take care of my family."

At the union hall here Local 807 President Nick Guernsey told the *Militant*, "Sixty-four percent of the workers at the two UAW-organized plants have less than five years' seniority. The company was banking that they would cross the picket line or vote for a substandard contract. They banked wrong."

At the Wisconsin plant, he said, "they don't have temporary workers. We do here. So, we had to take the approach of winning them to the fight."

"We reached out to the temporary workers and urged them to join the union. And a good number of them did," Guernsey said. "So, we've been paying those who joined the union and the strike and do their picket duty the same benefits that other members receive — \$400 a week. And we're going to keep our promise to fight to get them rehired once the strike is over."

"To counter company propaganda that we're hiding the details of their offer from the membership," Guernsey said, the union is making its proposals available to read in the union hall.

"Only 26 have crossed the picket line."

He said the company increased its initial offer of a 3% wage increase to 8%. "But, with the company's demand to increase medical insurance premiums and 401(k) costs," he pointed out, "the end result, even with an 8% wage increase, would be a \$1.96 an hour wage cut."

According to Guernsey, the company is not producing as much as it claims. One measure of its weakening position is the work schedule bosses are trying to impose on scabs to increase production. The plant is going to a schedule of 12 hours Monday through Friday, 10 hours on Saturday, and eight hours on Sunday, he said.

Strike support at Wisconsin plant

The firmness of support for the strike among workers came through loud and clear when Leroy Watson and John Hawkins spoke with strikers in Sturtevant July 3.

Ken Hartog, a quality specialist with 25 years' experience at the Wisconsin plant, was pulling his picket shift at the UAW Local 180 union hall. "We've had about 20 cross the picket line," Hartog said. "When Wisconsin became a right-to-work state about a dozen years ago, 11 people left the union right away. So, of course, they crossed. 'The company is showing just what it thinks of them — they're working them 72 hours a week! One of the guys just got fired for refusing to work those ridiculous hours,'" he said.

"We're telling people, 'Before you cross that picket line, come talk to us and we'll do what we can to help you.'"

"The union made a smart move, raising the strike benefit to \$400 a week. It allowed members to get a job during the strike and work an unlimited number of hours and still receive strike benefits, so long as they do their picket duty. Another smart move is paying for the health insurance, which Case cut off trying to pressure us back to work."

"Right now, we're not negotiating,"



The Hawk Eye/John Lovretta

United Auto Workers picket Case New Holland plant in Burlington, Iowa, May 3. Some 430 union members there and 600 in Sturtevant, Wisconsin, are on strike for wages that keep up with inflation and against onerous schedules that tear at workers' lives and their families.

Local 180 Vice President Micah Tharpe said. "They're trying to gauge how far we are willing to go. They signed a four-month contract with the scabs. So, they're probably willing to go through the end of August."

"Morale among the strikers is good, in terms of the union. Not in terms of the company," said Tharpe, who has 17 years at the plant, currently as a quality inspector. "Many workers are pretty angry. During the pandemic we were supposed to be essential workers, although the company did everything they could do get around CDC guidelines for masking and social distancing. Now they're showing us they don't care."

"One example says it all," Tharpe said. "At their nonunion plants they

start out assemblers at \$26 to \$27 an hour. At the union plants they start at a little over \$20."

Both locals have been receiving solidarity and donations from the surrounding communities and the labor movement.

Contributions can be dropped off at the UAW Local 180 union hall, 3323 Kearney Ave., Mount Pleasant, WI 53403. Messages of support and checks can be mailed to the same address. Messages can also be sent to president@uawlocal180.com.

Contributions can be dropped off at the Local 807 union hall, 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601. Messages of support and checks can be mailed to the same address. Messages can also be sent to uawlocal807@qwestoffice.net.

Oklahoma court sets 25 executions over next 2 years

BY JANET POST

An unprecedented number of executions were set by the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals July 1, looking to put to death 25 of the state's 43 death-row prisoners starting this August through 2024, almost one death per month. Dates were set for killing "prisoners with severe mental illness, brain damage, and claims of innocence," the Death Penalty Information Center protested.

The court's ruling came after Federal District Court Judge Stephen Friot denied a challenge to the state's three-drug lethal-injection protocol filed by more than 20 Oklahoma death-row prisoners in 2014. The prisoners say the protocol violates the Eighth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution since the use of drugs is a cruel and unusual punishment.

The sedative midazolam is used in the protocol. Scientific studies show when it is prepared in an acidic solution, as is the case in executions, it destroys lung tissue. Autopsies of four

men executed in Oklahoma between 2021 and 2022 show each of them had excess fluid in their lungs.

Another of the drugs used, potassium chloride, causes extreme pain "similar to being burned alive" wrote *Oklahoma Watch*.

In a botched Oklahoma execution on Oct. 28, 2021, John Marion Grant "began convulsing, so much so that his entire upper back repeatedly lifted off the gurney," reported Dan Snyder of Fox-25 TV. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections claims his execution was carried out "without complication."

Before Grant was executed there had been a moratorium on administering the death penalty in Oklahoma after Clayton Lockett writhed in pain for 43 minutes before dying of a heart attack when the state put him to death in 2014.

The prisoners' legal challenge was denied in 2015 by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision that said the prisoners had failed to prove a level of pain that would violate the Constitution and that it was *up to the prisoners* to propose an alternative drug for their own executions.

A year later a grand jury cited dozens of errors by state officials carrying out executions, including modifying the drug protocol without authority. The prisoners' case was reopened in 2020. Now they are appealing the July 1 decision to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

But the new execution schedule is set to begin before the appeal can even be heard.

One of those due to be put to death Sept. 22 is Richard Glossip. He was

convicted of hiring Justin Sneed to kill Barry Van Teese, the owner of the motel where Glossip worked in 1997. Sneed pled guilty to the killing. Thirty-four state legislators oppose Glossip's execution and call for a new hearing, saying authorities investigating the murder pressured Sneed to incriminate Glossip.

"The Socialist Workers Party calls for the complete and immediate abolition of the death penalty," Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania, told the *Militant*. "It's a barbaric weapon used by the capitalist ruling class to silence and intimidate working people, along with the cops, courts, prisons and their entire criminal 'justice' system."

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles
The Socialist Workers Party Program for Workers Today. Speaker: Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor of California. Sat., July 23, 6 p.m. Dinner and program, \$10. 5828 Wilshire Blvd. Tel. (323) 643-4968.

AUSTRALIA
Sydney
Crisis of Imperialist World Order: Deepening Conflicts in the Pacific. Expanding the Reach of Our Communist Program Among the Toilers. Celebrate the Opening of the Communist League's New Hall. International panel of speakers: Socialist Workers Party; Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Sat., July 23. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. Suite 2, first floor, 275 George St., Liverpool 2170. Tel.: +61 422 062 821.

—CALENDAR—

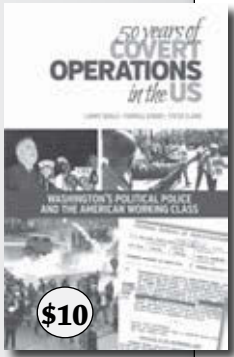
NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
Celebrate the Anniversary of the Opening of the Cuban Revolution. Speakers: Cuban Ambassador Edgardo Valdés López; Patrick Brown, Communist League, participant in recent May Day celebrations in Havana. Fri., July 22. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Trades Hall, 147 Great North Road, Grey Lynn. Sponsored by the Auckland Cuba Friendship Society.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class

Decades of spying and disruption by FBI targeting working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies. How expansion of "national security" state used to protect capitalist rule had bipartisan backing.



pathfinderpress.com

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Washington mushroom workers fight for better conditions

SUNNYSIDE, Wash. — Workers at Ostrom Mushroom Farm here turned in a petition with signatures of 200 current and former workers June 22 calling on bosses to “provide a workplace free from threats, excessive pressure, harassment, and retaliation.”

“We have an elected committee of 10 that meets to decide our next steps,” Ostrom worker José Martínez told the *Militant* at his home July 10. “We have also been gathering signatures outside the Fiesta Foods grocery store to win public support. We have had some meetings of 50 workers in the local park.”

The workers turned in the petitions following a rally and march by 100 workers, supporters and representatives of the United Farm Workers union.

Bosses recently raised the minimum quota for pickers from 65 pounds of mushrooms a day to more than 70, which workers say is unreasonable. Martínez said that Ostrom dropped the quota to 50 pounds after the march and the petition was delivered.

The committee is winning co-workers to sign cards to join the UFW.

In an attempt to divide the workers, Martínez said, Ostrom is bringing in “guest workers” through the government’s H-2A immigration program.

“They say there are not enough workers locally, but this isn’t true,” he said. “I have nothing against the visa workers, they are just like us.”

Mushroom worker Ramón González told the *Yakima Herald-Republic* that Ostrom often imposes mandatory overtime with no prior notice. That’s especially difficult for workers with children, Victoria Rudy, a UFW representative, told the paper.

When asked about farm conditions an Ostrom spokesperson told the *Militant* it had “no comment at this time.”

— Jacob Perasso

Norway’s government steps in to break oil workers strike

OSLO, Norway — After forcing the end of a strike by airplane mechanics demanding higher wages by imposing compulsory arbitration on June 28,

Labor Minister Marte Mjos Person did the same against striking oil workers a week later, this time citing the needs of the “war in Europe.”

Seventy-four offshore oil workers, members of the Lederne union, went on strike July 5 after voting down by a large majority a contract proposed by the employers and union negotiating committee. Union members face “high prices for electricity, growing inflation, and increased interest rates are being felt right in people’s pocketbooks,” union leader Audun Invartsen told the press. “Our workers need an increase in their real take-home pay.”

The union pulled members off three Equinor platforms, forcing the oil giant to shut them down. The Norwegian capitalist state owns 67% of the company. The union was ready to expand the strike to involve 382 members, affecting other platforms and companies.

Person, a leader of the Labor Party, told Nettavisen, an online newspaper, the government shut down the strike because it would have had “serious consequences” for deliveries of gas to Great Britain and Germany. In a press release



Evan Abell/Yakima Herald-Republic via AP

Workers at the Ostrom Mushroom Farm in Sunnyside, Washington, march June 22 with petitions signed by 200 workers to protest bosses’ threats and harassment on the job.

she said the union’s plan to expand the strike would have had a critical effect in today’s situation, “both in relation to the energy crisis and the geopolitical situation with a war in Europe.”

Invarsten said in a statement that the government’s decision to end the strike was a “disappointment,” but the strike

has “shown how strong solidarity, unity and democracy are” in the union. “The strike was the right choice.”

When contacted for an interview, a secretary at the Labor Department told the *Militant* that everyone except herself had gone on summer vacation.

— Greg McCartan

Nebraska rail workers rally, say: ‘No contract, no peace’

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — Chanting “Lincoln is a union town, and us rail workers will not go down!” and “No contract, no peace!” over 100 Burlington Northern Santa Fe union rail workers and their supporters marched and rallied here for nearly six hours July 10. The protest took place at the rail depot in the heart of this city’s Haymarket business district.

Called by Lincoln Rally for Rail Labor, the majority of rail workers at the action were union officials and members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees from eastern and central Nebraska. The BMWF organizes workers that build and maintain rail tracks and bridges on all the six major railroads and many smaller railroads in the U.S.

Protesters demanded wage increases, no more concessions to the railroad companies on health care, not less than

two-person crews on trains for the safety of both workers and the public, and for an end to harsh new attendance policies that wreak havoc with workers’ lives and families. “The rail unions have worked without a contract since July 1, 2019,” BMWF member Paul Bellow told the *Militant*.

The BMWF and 10 other rail unions are bargaining together for a national contract, including the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen / Teamsters Rail Conference; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Transport Workers Union; Transportation Communications Union / IAM, including its Brotherhood of Railway Carmen Division; and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD).

Along with members of those unions, other unionists joined the rally from

the American Postal Workers Union; Communications Workers of America; National Association of Letter Carriers; United Steelworkers; International Brotherhood of Teamsters; union officials from the Lincoln Central Labor Council and Nebraska AFL-CIO; and Greg Regan, president of the national AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department. He is on tour speaking out about the negotiations.

“The railroad bosses have been successful in the past in driving a wedge between the rail unions,” Ash Anderson, organizer for the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way working out of Lincoln, said. “Now we are on the road, as this rally shows, of organizing our unions to join together to get a contract by building working-class solidarity.”

A number of signs read “This is not a strike.” They reflected rail unionists’ caution because of the rail bosses’ moves to prevent any interference with the onerous new absentee policy.

Workers and their unions — SMART-TD and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers — had responded to the unilateral imposition of the attendance policy by preparing for a strike. BNSF bosses got a federal judge to ban all strikes, sickouts, slowdowns, picketing, or any kind of workers protests against the policy. The judge also ordered rail union officials to prevent all workers from organizing any kind of protest that could interfere with train operations.

“There are over 10,000 rail union members working for BNSF and Union Pacific as ‘essential workers’ in Nebraska,” Sue Martin, president of the Nebraska AFL-CIO, said at the rally. “We stand with you in your demands for those employers now to show up for you.”

Similar actions are being organized by rail unionists in a number of other cities in the next two months: Omaha at 14th and Douglas streets on July 20; Waterloo, Iowa, on July 20; Galesburg, Illinois, July 30; Toledo, Ohio, Aug. 20; and in Minneapolis.

Join these actions to support union railroad workers!

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 28, 1997

UNITED NATIONS — “We have come to denounce the colonial and imperialistic policies that the United States has imposed on Puerto Rico for the last 99 years,” said Raquel Rivera June 19 at the UN Special Committee on Decolonization. She spoke for the Puerto Rico Collective.

Cuban ambassador Bruno Rodríguez stated, “Cuba reiterates its solidarity with the brother peoples of Puerto Rico.” He said the Special Committee “has a duty to remain vigilant” and not forget the plight of Puerto Rican political prisoners. Both Rodríguez and Rivera spoke against the U.S. military presence on the island.

The hearings were marked by the participation of unionists from Puerto Rico and young Puerto Ricans in the United States, who were demanding the release of 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners held in jails across the U.S.



July 28, 1972

JULY 19 — A “state of emergency” was declared for the Attica Correctional Facility yesterday by the prison’s superintendent. Last Sept. 13 New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller shocked the entire world by ordering a murderous assault on rebelling prisoners at Attica in which 33 inmates were killed.

The current “state of emergency” has been declared in response to a peaceful “lock-in” by more than half of the 1,200 men confined in Attica. The protest began July 17. The July 18 *New York Times* reported that 900 inmates refused to leave their cells.

The prisoners’ demands were reported to be “revised work schedules and exercise periods and new clothing.” The same day the “state of emergency” was declared for Attica, the Maryland prison system was rocked by the third protest in four days. The July 18 protest hit the Prince Georges County Jail.



July 28, 1947

On July 20 Dutch troops burst into the Batavia radio station of the Indonesian Republic. With this midnight blitzkrieg attack, the Netherlands imperialist government launched its long-planned war of annihilation on the Republic that dared to challenge the centuries-old rule of the Dutch colonial despots. Similar raids were under way throughout the city. Dawn revealed thousands of troops fanning into the countryside.

The strategic aim of Dutch imperialism was to smash the Indonesian Republic and re-establish the despotic rule that enabled them to keep the Indonesian people bled white generation after generation. They had no intention of permitting this fabulously wealthy colonial area to slip through their fingers.

The Truman administration has consistently backed the Dutch capitalists. Wall Street has a big stake in Indonesia.

Protesters in Sri Lanka fight to oust gov’t amid social crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

Faced with months of determined and massive protests over their handling of the country’s crippling social and economic crisis, and widespread corruption, Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe announced July 9 that they would resign soon. Rajapaksa has fled the country.

Despite the shutdown of most public transportation and many workplaces, arrests and attacks on demonstrators by the army and police, 100,000 people joined a July 9 protest in Colombo, the capital, piling onto semitrailer trucks, trains and overcrowded buses, or walking for miles.

For the first time since the start of daily protests in March, soldiers joined the actions. Thousands of protesters occupied Rajapaksa’s luxurious home in Colombo. Volunteers organized to keep order as thousands toured the home, while police and soldiers stood aside.

Many were amazed at the opulence of Rajapaksa’s residence with its private complex with swimming pool and fancy menus, while at least a quarter of Sri Lanka’s 22 million people are skipping meals.

Leaders of the Aragalaya “struggle” coalition say they won’t halt the actions until power is handed over to an interim

government that excludes Rajapaksa’s Sri Lanka Podujana Party, establishes a new constitution, and calls elections.

Some 70% of Sri Lanka’s 22 million people are Buddhists; 12.6% are Hindus, mostly ethnic Tamils; 9.7% are Muslim; and 7.4% are Christian.

In 2019 Rajapaksa won the election largely on the promise of shutting down Islamist groups that had carried out bombings that killed nearly 270 people.

A striking feature of the recent protests has been unity of the main ethnic groups, despite attempts by the regime to keep working people divided.

Little fuel left

The government defaulted on its foreign debt in May, missing interest payments on some \$2.5 billion in bonds, part of its \$50 billion foreign debt.

In a first for any country since the 1970s, the government halted all “non-essential” fuel sales at the end of June, leaving most working people without gas and diesel. Officials said there was less than a week’s worth of fuel left for essential services.

Taxi drivers and others have waited at gas stations in mileslong lines for days. Public employees have been instructed to work from home. Schools are closed. Electricity is cut off three to four hours a day. The price of rice



Reuters/Adnan Abidi

Protesters demanding resignation of Sri Lankan government rally at office of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in Colombo July 13. Fight has united all Sri Lankan ethnic groups.

has increased nearly 300% in the last year, and tomatoes by 400%. Essential medicines are scarce.

IMF bailout will squeeze workers

A delegation from the International Monetary Fund left Sri Lanka in early July without an agreement on giving the government a \$3 billion “bailout.” Any new loans by the IMF would go to cover interest payments on outstanding loans, not for investment or infrastructure. In exchange for buying time by sinking the country deeper in debt, the IMF is demanding a new “macro-economic and structural policy package.” In other words, squeeze more out of working people.

Much press coverage centers on blaming the crisis on corruption and policies of the Rajapaksa family, which has played the central role in the government for decades.

After 2009 Sri Lanka became a “popular destination for bondholders looking for high-yielding investment opportunities,” notes the *Financial Times*. In other words, the government borrowed at high interest rates, often for vanity projects that lined the pockets of the Rajapaksa dynasty. This includes the Beijing-built, largely unused Hambantota international port and airport near the Rajapaksas ancestral village.

Making matters worse, in 2021 the government banned synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in the name of promoting “organic” farming and saving on import costs. That was an unmitigated disaster, causing a 14% to 20% drop in rice production and a shrinking tea crop,

Sri Lanka’s second-biggest export. Protests by farmers forced a lifting of the ban, but by then the government didn’t have the hard currency needed to import enough for this year’s crop.

Like many semicolonial countries, Sri Lanka has been especially hard hit by the worldwide capitalist crisis and the drop in trade and tourism made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Soaring prices for imported oil, fertilizers and pesticides have battered the country.

Competing capitalist powers continue to maneuver to make sure their banks and bondholders get paid first. Some of the biggest holders of Sri Lankan debt are governments and lenders in China, Japan and India.

The Sri Lankan government offered up territory as collateral to Beijing. When it defaulted on loans for the construction of the Hambantota port it had to hand over the entire facility in 2017, and 15,000 acres surrounding it, to the Chinese government for 99 years. In exchange, Beijing forgave \$1.2 billion in debt. This gives the Chinese rulers a foothold in a major commercial and military waterway.

The Sri Lankan government still faces debt payments to Beijing of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion this year. The government has only \$25 million in hard currency on hand, while fuel costs alone are \$500 million a month

None of the bourgeois opposition parties have any road forward out of this crisis that can advance the interests of working people. And a revolutionary-minded working-class leadership has yet to emerge from the struggle.

Protesters in China: ‘Give us back our life savings!’



Reuters

On July 10 Beijing authorities violently attacked a peaceful protest of more than 1,000 people outside the local branch of the People’s Bank of China in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan province. They were demanding the government protect their rights and return their life savings from four rural banks there. Banners read: “We are opposed to unchecked power” and “Give us back our legal deposits, the people need their deposits for survival.”

Those banks have frozen millions of dollars since April. Images of the government’s brutal response to the demonstration, one of the largest in China since the pandemic, spread quickly on the internet, outrunning the country’s online censors and sparking a wave of criticism against the government.

“What have the ordinary people done wrong?” wrote one user of China’s Weibo social media. “They get beatings after they lost their money?”

Rural banks in China — like the four in Zhengzhou — are notorious for profiteering. Banking regulators accuse them of financial crimes and suggested those who have lost their savings are “consumers of financial products,” not depositors, and may not be covered by deposit insurance.

China’s broader economic slowdown and the widening impact of COVID-19 lockdowns could shatter more financial institutions and hit working people with disaster. Many of the protesters said they are now destitute.

“We came all the way to Zhengzhou to get our money back, and we didn’t want to have conflict with anyone,” Feng Tianyu, a pregnant 31-year-old, told the press. She said men dressed in white shirts pulled her by her hair and arms onto a bus where the police beat the demonstrators. She was eventually taken to a hospital for stomach pains, but was refused admission.

Another protester, Sun, said he was covered in bruises from being repeatedly stomped by security guards. “The incident completely overturned my perception,” he said. “I’ve lived all my life placing so much faith in the government. After today, I’ll never trust it again.”

— VIVIAN SAHNER

SWP candidates in Minneapolis speak out against antisemitic flyers

BY EDWIN FRUIT

Socialist Workers Party candidates in Minnesota issued a statement July 5 answering vile antisemitic leaflets distributed anonymously in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul, near Talmud Torah’s Newman elementary school.

The rightist leaflet was headlined “Every Single Aspect of Gun Control Is Jewish” and featured a Star of David along with a satanic symbol. Underneath were pictures of 21 Jewish politicians and activists who the flyer charges back gun control but “are protected with guns paid for by taxpayers.” The flyer advertises a notorious pro-Nazi website for more information.

The distributor of the rightist flyer stuffed them in individual plastic baggies, weighted down with rice, and then

tossed them from a car while driving through the neighborhood during the night of June 27. A neighbor who found one retrieved as many as he could before children came to school.

“The fight against Jew-hatred and antisemitism is important for the whole working class,” Gabrielle Prosser, SWP candidate for governor of Minnesota, Kevin Dwire for lieutenant governor and David Rosenfeld for U.S. Congress said in the statement. “The goal of antisemitism is to provide a scapegoat to divert us from seeing the real enemy — the capitalist system itself.

“We urge all working people, our unions and other working-class organizations to join us in speaking out against Jew-hatred.”

Cuba's internationalist volunteers product of socialist revolution

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July is *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa: Reports from Equatorial Guinea* by Mary-Alice Waters and Martín Koppel. The two joined a Militant reporting team there in 2005 and 2008, witnessing both changes in social relations as capitalist development gave birth to a working class, and also the impact of revolutionary Cuba's internationalist volunteers. This excerpt is from the chapter "Cuban Medical Cooperation: The Internationalist Example of a Socialist Revolution." Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

The medical cooperation between the Cuban and Guinean governments ... aims to train Equatorial Guinean doctors and nurses who will work to transform public health care in their country. This is a principle guiding all Cuba's medical missions in every country where they are invited to work. ...

Such medical collaboration is an expression of the proletarian internationalist course that has marked Cuba's socialist revolution for half a century.

In 1963 the very first Cuban medical brigade volunteered to go to Africa. They went to newly independent Alge-



Militant/Martín Koppel

Cuban medical brigade at Ebebiyin hospital, Equatorial Guinea, July 28, 2008, with Guinean students, third and fourth from left, is example of internationalism of Cuba's workers, farmers.

ria, less than a year after the French colonial regime had been defeated by the Algerian National Liberation Front in a long and bitter war.

That same year, Cuba responded to a request by Algeria's workers and peasants government to send weapons and volunteer combatants to help deter an imperialist-backed assault by the Moroccan regime. Over the decades, Cuban internationalists have fought alongside anti-imperialist forces throughout Africa — from the Congo to Guinea-Bissau to Angola — as well as in Latin America.

That tens of thousands of Cuban medical personnel are today providing health care in the most hard-to-reach parts of countries the world over is one of the most demonstrative expressions of the socialist character of the revolution that Cuban workers and farmers carried out, overturning capitalist property relations and transforming the consciousness of millions. No other country in the world is capable of anything remotely comparable, nor does any other government want to do so.

As Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, himself a physician, explained and demonstrated by his own example, "To be a revolutionary doctor, you must first make a revolution." In Cuba not only has health care — an expensive commodity under capitalism — become free and available to all as a basic right, but those who become medi-

cal workers are educated in that spirit.

As of 2008, more than 38,000 Cuban doctors, dentists, nurses, and medical technicians are working as volunteers in 73 countries, according to Cuba's Ministry of Health. That includes 1,500 medical personnel in 35 African countries. Cuban personnel are responsible for medical schools not only in Equatorial Guinea but in Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Eritrea.

The Cuban medical brigade has been in Equatorial Guinea since 2000, [Brigade head Dr. Juan Carlos] Méndez told us, as part of the Comprehensive Health Program for Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. That initiative had been launched by the Cuban government two years earlier in response to the destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America. "We sent emergency medical brigades to the region struck by the hurricane," he said, and from there the program expanded to other parts of the world.

Today the 160 doctors, nurses, and lab technicians who make up the Cuban brigade in Equatorial Guinea are working in all 18 of the country's districts — 57 of them on the island of Bioko and 103 on the continent. Except for those with special leadership responsibilities, who sometimes serve longer, brigade members generally work here for two years, with a one-month vacation at the end of the first year.

"The Cuban doctors go to every cor-

ner of the country, even to the most remote areas," President Teodoro Obiang Nguema told us in an August 7 interview. "You can see the discipline and morale of those doctors."

The living expenses of the Cuban medical workers are paid by the government of Equatorial Guinea. "We provide them with a stipend, housing, transportation, and other necessities," Obiang said.

In addition to the minimal stipend — the same for all personnel, irrespective of qualifications — the Cuban government pays the Cuban medical volunteers their regular monthly salaries in Cuban pesos, giving that amount directly to their families in Cuba or depositing it in a bank account held for them until their return. Medical workers who have completed international missions receive 50 dollars a month in hard currency in addition to their salary in Cuban pesos. ...

"Here we discovered a reality we ourselves had never encountered in Cuba," said Dr. Laura Cobo. "We've seen preventable diseases we had previously only read about in books. We've seen children dying of malaria or dying of hunger." Some of the doctors noted that many diseases common in Equatorial Guinea had ravaged working people in Cuba as well, before the socialist revolution triumphed in the early 1960s and began transforming social relations. Even the oldest of the brigade members, however, are generally too young to have experienced those capitalist conditions firsthand. ...

Cobo said the hardest thing she's had to get used to is that "health care here is a commodity." In Cuba high-quality medical care is free for everyone. But here "patients have to pay for everything, from medicine to emergency operations. If they can't pay we're not supposed to treat them."

Some doctors told us they find this so difficult to carry out that they not infrequently forget to tell patients they have to pay.

"This experience prepares us to work better on behalf of the Cuban Revolution," Cobo said. "When we return home, we'll be able to use these experiences — despite all the material shortages we face in Cuba — to explain the gains of the revolution," to explain what a socialist revolution means.

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CANADA

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FRANCE

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Back Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page and Kharkiv by fierce Ukrainian resistance earlier in the war.

“As the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union collapsed in face of massive popular mobilizations at the beginnings of the 1990s, Ukraine was one of 14 former republics to declare national independence,” a March 3 statement by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, explains. “Now Putin’s regime is ruthlessly seeking to claw back, under Moscow’s hegemony, those nations incarcerated in the czarist prison house of nations, regenerating the Russian empire today with Putin as its czar.”

The statement is widely used by SWP members and supporters, along with weekly *Militant* coverage, to campaign in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty and to demand Russian troops get out.

Despite Moscow’s “pause,” highly destructive and deadly shelling and missile strikes targeting civilian areas in cities and towns across Ukraine continue. This paves the way for a renewed Russian push for territory in Donetsk at the same time that it punishes Ukrainian workers and farmers for their resistance all across the country.

Faced with an inability to recruit Ukrainians to staff pro-Russian local government structures in Kherson and other conquered areas in the south of Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin has been forced to send in Russian political police operatives and other officials while taking steps to integrate the conquered territory into Russia.

The difficulties Moscow faces have been acknowledged by none other than veteran Russian commander Igor Gir-

kin, who, under the alias Igor Strelkov, served as defense minister of the Russian puppet Donetsk People’s Republic in 2014. The Ukrainian military, he wrote on Telegram, dragged out the battles in Luhansk “with the aim of gaining as much time as possible and inflicting maximum losses on the Russian strike force.” Then it “managed to withdraw the core of its defending troops, avoiding the encirclement of even a small part of them.”

Russian forces have failed to break Ukrainian military capacity, he says. On the contrary, he admits, Moscow’s difficulties in raising fresh troops mean that it is Russian capacity that is at risk of being worn down completely.

Anger in Russia over casualties

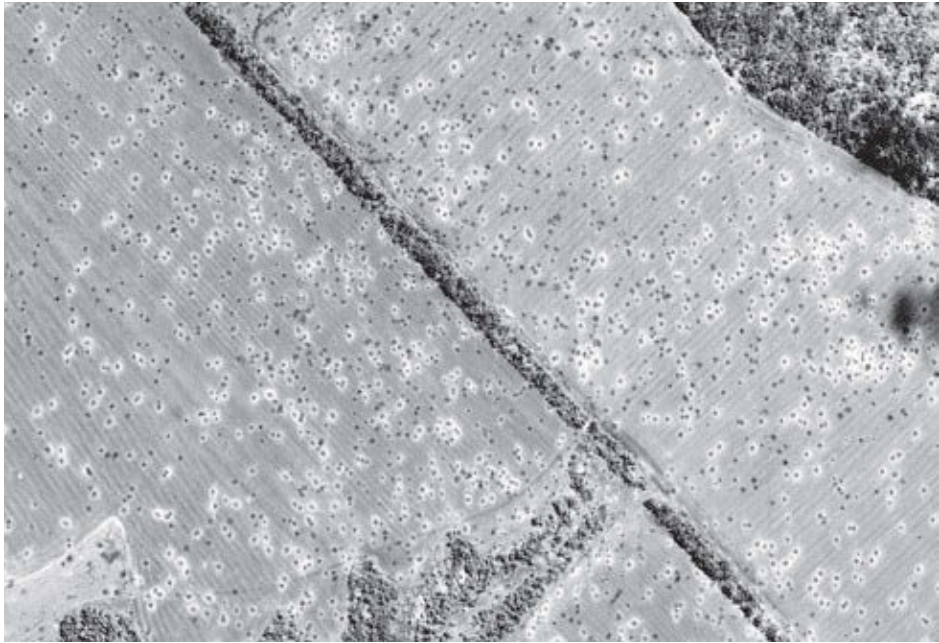
After at least five Russian soldiers were killed by Ukrainian artillery in the first week of July, their mothers spoke out, blaming pro-Kremlin media for revealing their locations. The letter was sent to the local Committee of Soldiers Mothers in the Astrakhan region of southern Russia where their sons’ unit is based.

The Russian army desperately needs more soldiers but Putin is loathe to formally declare war on Ukraine, which is necessary for him to impose a national draft. He insists on calling his invasion a “special military operation” and has made it a crime in Russia to call it a war.

Instead, Moscow is promising big cash bonuses for volunteers, reservists and mercenaries. It is especially recruiting from impoverished ethnic minority regions of Russia.

Some young Russian men are refusing to answer this year’s annual conscription summons.

Krill, 26, an information technology worker from southern Russia who asked Reuters not to use his surname, said he hasn’t responded to calls from the military. “The people in Ukraine



Satellite image from mid June shows Ukrainian fields peppered with hundreds of shell craters near Sloviansk, in the Donetsk region. Moscow is preparing next steps in invasion with massive, indiscriminate bombardment of cities and countryside, leaving ravaged landscapes.

are like brothers,” he said. “I know many people in the country and I can’t support these actions.”

Capitalist rulers from Germany to Japan to Australia are rearming as Moscow’s invasion — the largest land war in Europe since World War II — announced a new stage in the growing imperialist world disorder. As the war in Ukraine continues far longer than most imperialist “friends of Ukraine” anticipated, shifting alliances and rifts among rival imperialist powers seeking a road to defend their own markets and profits are coming to the fore.

Wider tensions were on display as the foreign ministers of the Group of 20 industrialized nations met in Bali, Indonesia, July 8. Washington failed to get several major semicolonial countries to follow its lead on sanctions against Russia, which fall heavily on working people there.

Referring to the war in Ukraine, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said, “It has become more difficult for the world to sit together.”

The rulers of Germany, France and Italy are pushing Kyiv to seek talks to end this war, even if it means concessions to Putin’s terms. To further

pressure these powers, Moscow cut off its gas supplies to Europe July 11, citing a need for “maintenance work.” Opinion pieces in liberal papers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* cover their own desire for an end to Ukrainian resistance by complaining about workers’ low attention span and how they’re increasingly suffering from “war fatigue.” These articles urge the Joseph Biden administration to look for ways to put pressure on the Ukrainian government.

Belarus tensions over Moscow’s war

Moscow also has difficulties with some of its allies. Even before the war began, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko allowed Russian troops to operate in and from Belarusian territory. His regime has given Russian forces “full control” of an airfield in the Gomel region, less than 20 miles from the Ukraine-Belarus border.

But Lukashenko now faces opposition from senior Special Forces officers, who wrote an open letter to him, the July 9 *Express* reported. They rejected deeper Belarusian involvement in Moscow’s war, saying it would make the country “an international outcast.”

Insisting that “the Belarus Republic” should maintain “full authority on its own territory” and over foreign policy, the officers wrote, “Russia’s occupation of the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, which is [a] friend of our state” is an “attempt to pull Belarus into a completely unprovoked war against a sovereign state.”

The Happy Ukraine Party is led by Oleksandr Klymenko, a former minister in the brutal Moscow-backed regime of Viktor Yanukovych, which was toppled by the working-class Maidan upsurge in 2014.

After that victory, the new government of then President Petro Poroshenko — himself a large-scale capitalist boss — passed thought-control “decommunization” laws outlawing all communist political views and activities, and making it illegal to deny “the criminal character of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991 in Ukraine.”

In fact, the communist-led workers and farmers government led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party that came to power in 1917 unconditionally granted Ukraine the right to self-determination. Like all of Lenin’s revolutionary policies, this was overturned in a counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin.

The government’s bans are a deadly threat to the working class, setting a dangerous precedent that can and will be used against others, including all those that fight to advance the interests of the working class.

Constitutional right to freedom of worship upheld by court ruling

Continued from front page because they are religious.” The issue here, the court decided, was the Constitution’s protection of the right to worship, not a case of separation of church and state.

In a dissenting minority opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote, “With greater religious diversity comes greater risk of religiously based strife, conflict and social division.”

His view that the religious beliefs of working people are dangerous, echoes those of former President Barack Obama. In 2008 Obama complained that people who lost jobs in small towns in the Midwest “get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them.” Liberals see working people as fundamentally bigoted, and think they need to find ways to control us, assaulting constitutional rights along the way.

On June 27 the court backed Washington state high school football coach Joe Kennedy, who sued after being fired in 2015 for leading prayers on the field after games. Kennedy had told students they were under no obligation to join the prayers and appointed two players who didn’t take part as team captains. But the school district instructed him to stop praying. Kennedy stopped leading prayers in the locker room and during the game, but continued kneeling to pray after the game. His contract wasn’t renewed.

The liberal press is beside itself claiming the Supreme Court is taking a hatchet to separation of church and state. In a dissenting opinion Justice Sonia Sotomayor claimed Kennedy’s actions caused “severe disruption to school events.”



Blaine amendments, laws targeting state government aid to Catholic schools, were adopted during rise of anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic bigotry in the 19th century. They are still on books in 37 states. Drawing from 1871 depicts Catholic bishops as crocodiles looking to gobble up American schoolchildren.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote for the majority. “Here, a government entity sought to punish an individual for engaging in a brief, quiet, personal religious observance doubly protected by the free exercise and free speech clauses of the First Amendment,” he said. Under the school district’s interpretation, schools could “fire teachers for praying quietly over their lunch, for wearing a yarmulke to school, or for offering a midday prayer during a break before practice.”

The Constitution’s First Amendment, part of the Bill of Rights, states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” That same amendment protects the right of free speech and the right to assemble — the right of working people to hear, say and discuss with others what we want, with-

out government intervention.

These decisions help address the long history of state laws and court decisions that have cut across rights of individuals to worship as they see fit, laws that are used to divide the working class.

Thirty-seven states still have some form of “Blaine Amendment” on their books, provisions adopted in the 19th century as part of the rise of anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic bigotry aimed at the rapidly growing Irish Catholic population. In Maine, one Catholic priest was tarred and feathered. In Alabama and Georgia, the Ku Klux Klan became one of the principal backers of these laws, recognizing them as an effective way to marginalize not just Catholics, but also Blacks and Jews.

These amendments are named after Republican politician James G. Blaine from Maine, who championed

an effort to amend the Bill of Rights to bar any funding for Catholic schools. It narrowly failed. At the time, most public schools were unapologetically Protestant. Blaine pushed the measure as part of preparing a run for president.

Some bigoted politicians pushed ahead and passed similar amendments to their state constitutions. But most of the Blaine amendments come from a federal law passed later that required territories seeking to become new states to adopt such language.

It took until 2017 for the Supreme Court to overturn New Mexico’s Blaine law. It did so in a court ruling that overturned a ban on borrowing books through the state’s book lending program at religious schools mostly attended by Hispanic and Native American students.

In recent decades Democrats have turned to the Supreme Court under a

liberal majority to legislate policies they’ve been unable to get through Congress. They want the court to act as if it was a legislative body, not a separate third branch of the federal government with its system of checks and balances whose function is to defend constitutional rights. They are furious with recent court rulings that say that if either the Democratic or Republican party want to change laws, then they need to go out and win a majority to pass them in Congress. Liberal media like the *New York Times* frequently carry opinion pieces arguing the U.S. is divided along an ever-sharper Red-Blue axis, claiming the government faces an imminent takeover by a Christian-based far right that must be stopped at all costs. But the sharpening disputes on rights and laws roiling U.S. politics isn’t “Red-Blue,” it’s the class struggle driving battles in all government bodies.

“The stakes are high for working people in defending constitutional rights, including freedom of worship,” Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Georgia, told the *Militant*. “They provide protections from government interference, as working people seek to unite to defend ourselves and our families — in rural areas and cities — to fight for better wages and working conditions, health care, child care and campaign against the rulers’ wars.”

Protests hit Russian-occupied Mariupol over lack of water

BY ROY LANDERSEN

People living in the largely devastated outskirts of the Russian-occupied city of Mariupol erupted in a substantial protest July 8 after two pensioners died in the street trying to find drinking water. A meeting at a school in the Volonterivka district demanded that Moscow’s “authorities” urgently provide them with clean water, electricity

and transport. The two elderly people had succumbed to heat wave conditions after having to walk for miles.

“About 3,000 people and at least 200 children remain cut off from the minimum basic conditions of existence” in Volonterivka, Petro Andryushchenko, adviser to the Ukrainian mayor of Mariupol, reported that day. Occupation officials first tried to appease the protesters by offering them some food. When those at the meeting reacted with anger, the occupiers fled under the protection of Russian troops carrying assault rifles.

In Moscow’s four-month siege of Mariupol, Russian forces repeatedly bombed residential areas and civilian infrastructure, damaging miles of water pipes. Similar devastation has been inflicted in Severodonetsk and elsewhere in Ukraine, as Moscow’s army relies on mass bombing of civilian areas in preparation for laying siege to them. A large-scale humanitarian catastrophe is building in these Russian-occupied areas.

The day after the Volonterivka protests, occupation authorities tried to patch artillery-damaged rusty pipes with makeshift clamps. Water flows “ended up in muddy pools on the street, rather than in people’s taps,” Halya Coynash wrote July 11 for the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group. There is no plan to rebuild the pipelines.

New International Magazine of Marxist politics and theory available at pathfinderpress.com

In blow to rights, Ukraine upholds ban on Communist Party

BY TERRY EVANS

In a serious blow to political rights, a Ukrainian administrative court in Lviv July 5 upheld the government’s longstanding ban on the Communist Party and the Happy Ukraine Party. Both were among the 11 parties ordered shut down by President Volodymyr Zelensky in May on trumped up charges of having “links with Russia.” Most of those parties in fact oppose Moscow’s invasion and join in Ukraine’s fight for independence.

These bans take advantage of Moscow’s assault to push a broader drive

by Ukraine’s capitalist rulers to attack the rights of working people. This includes the Zelensky government’s new anti-labor code, which allows bosses to rip up contracts workers won setting wages and conditions, impose longer hours and give bosses the power to fire workers without notice.

The court announced the state’s seizure of all the Communist Party’s “property, funds, and other assets,” along with “its regional, city, district organizations, primary centers and other structural entities.” Kyiv’s moves to ban the CP date back to 2015.

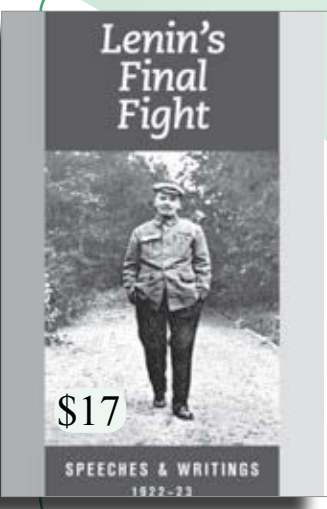
“I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism.”

“It must be absolutely insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be presided over in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. Absolutely!”

— V.I. Lenin, 1922

In 1922 and 1923 Lenin waged his last political battle. At stake was whether the revolution would remain on the proletarian course that had brought workers and peasants to power.

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Build solidarity with UAW strikers at Case New Holland!

Help get the word out about the strike by workers at Case New Holland widely in the labor movement and beyond! This fight by hundreds of United Auto Workers members in Iowa and Wisconsin is a fight in the interest of all workers. They're defending themselves and their families from skyrocketing prices by fighting for better wages and pensions.

Like employers everywhere, bosses at Case count on keeping the strike out of the news, leaving fighting workers isolated. Socialist Workers Party candidates champion working-class struggles like this, from protests by Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail workers across the country for the right to strike against government restrictions, for better pay and safer working conditions, and against bosses' harsh attendance policies; to the fight by mushroom workers in Sunnyside, Washington, for better working conditions.

These battles come after gains were won by striking bakery workers, nurses, steelworkers and others over the past year. Striking miners at Warrior Met Coal in

Alabama are determined to win their bitter 15-month strike to defend their union and win a better contract.

For decades too many union officials relied on collaborating with the bosses and getting Democrats elected, forswearing the use of union power and solidarity. When capitalist profit rates started declining beginning in the mid-1970s, bosses responded by accelerating their assaults on our wages, working conditions, and relentless speedup on the job.

Since the 1990s the labor movement has been in retreat, resulting in a big decline in union membership, to a low of 6.1% in the private sector, below what it was in 1929.

Today we face both plunging living standards from the highest inflation in 40 years and a slowdown in production and hiring.

More workers support the labor movement today and are willing to use their unions to defend hard-fought gains, reject divisive multitier contracts, and win protection from ruinous price hikes. The low

point in labor resistance is behind us. There is no strike wave, but there are more openings to use unions to fight for what workers need. Millions of workers, farmers and youth can be won to join in organizing solidarity with these labor battles — support that is crucial to their outcome.

Through these fights workers build their self-confidence and class consciousness. We come to recognize there are two classes, with interests that cannot be reconciled. Only by driving down our wages and conditions can bosses compete for markets against rivals. Workers can only defend ourselves by standing up to them and recognizing we share interests in common with fellow working people around the world against the exploiting classes.

Join workers at Case on their picket lines. Bring your co-workers and fellow unionists. Use the *Militant* to get out the word about their fight. Send messages of support and win contributions to their strike funds. Help win a victory for all working people!

Bosses rule through Democrats and Republicans, workers need a labor party

Continued from front page

Unable to even get all Democrats to vote for his agenda, Biden is turning to federal regulations, White House executive orders, and, where he can, sympathetic judges to push through Democrats' policies. What Biden calls "pro-labor" legislation are measures that tie workers and our unions to the capitalist state, undercutting the power of workers and farmers to organize independently in our millions to fight for our own class interests.

Instead of mounting a popular fight to defend up to 3 million workers and retirees whose pensions are now insolvent, union officials turned to Biden. He snuck a pension "fix" into the 2021 COVID relief bill. In a July 6 speech to union members in Cleveland, Biden claimed he had ensured the pensions would keep coming. Actually, the bill allows pension fund managers to increase investments in riskier stocks.

This makes workers' pensions even more dependent on the whims of capitalist investors, whose only interests are their own private profit. During the first six months of 2022, the stock market fell more than 20%. Further declines put pensions at risk.

Basing workers' retirement on Wall Street gains and corporate profits is a disaster for working people. It illustrates the perils of tying the destiny of workers and our families to the capitalist rulers and their parties.

None of what the Biden administration advances has to do with organizing workers to fight for what we need. Our unions need to lead a social movement to win government-guaranteed retirement for the working class as a whole, not fringe benefits for a relative few that depend on employers' profitability. The pension disaster is just one part of the broader carnage workers face today as the capitalist rulers move to push the deepening crisis of their system onto our backs, including all responsibility for care for children, the elderly and the sick.

Biden appointee Jennifer Abruzzo, general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, told the press this month she is using the courts to pursue employer violations of labor regulations more aggressively than her Republican predecessor. Workers, she claimed, should know "their government is working for them."

Both Democrats and Republicans, and the government bureaucrats they appoint, serve the bosses at workers' expense. Politics isn't a clash between liberals and conservatives, as the media says. All political questions are at root class questions and it's not "our" government, as Abruzzo claims, it's *theirs*.

"Democrats and Republicans are being torn asunder as the crisis of their capitalist masters deepens. The socialist left is pushing to take over the Democrats,

and Trump and his supporters the Republican Party," Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, told the *Militant*. "Biden's popularity has plummeted to just over 30%, as working people see the Democrats' 'woke' politics as contrary to their working-class values and needs.

"Democrats and Republicans alike despise working people, who they view as 'deplorables,' as Hillary Clinton famously put it," Kennedy said. "And increasingly they *fear* the working class and its potential power." Support for our unions is growing today — to the highest level in decades.

For years union officials have relied on getting "friends of labor" among capitalist politicians elected to office. This course has gone hand-in-hand with deepening collaboration with the employers on the job, based on the idea that our wages and working conditions are dependent on bosses making profits, not what workers and our unions are strong enough to fight for.

Class struggle vs. class collaboration

After the U.S. rulers emerged as top dog at the end of the second imperialist world war, they reaped two decades of capitalist expansion at the expense of their rivals. Union officials retreated from organizing the kind of mass battles and social movements that built the industrial unions in the 1930s. Workers made some modest gains in real wages without having to wage sharp battles, and our unions got weaker.

When profit rates began to fall and the capitalist economy contracted beginning in the 1970s, unions were unprepared for the assaults unleashed by the employers. These accelerated again after the 2008 financial crash and under the added pressures of the shutdowns imposed by bosses and the government in response to the COVID pandemic.

The real needs of the working class — wages high enough to match inflation, now at 9.1%; federally funded retirement and health care, and above all jobs — will only be secured by mobilizing union ranks to fight the bosses and organizing independently of their twin Democratic and Republican parties.

Confronted by the staunch anti-union owners of Amazon and other bosses, the opposite course has been pursued by some union leaders and Democrats. Rather than building a powerful national effort to organize Amazon, they campaigned to get the Newark, New Jersey, government to prevent the internet sales giant from setting up a hub there that would have created 1,000 much-needed new jobs. City officials conceded to the left, canceling the project July 7.

Changing the wretched conditions that workers face at Amazon, and countless other workplaces, can and will only be organized by workers inside the plants and broader solidarity, not by preventing bosses from hiring. Over the past 18 months, more union members have used unions to stand up to the bosses, mounting strikes that have won some gains and set an example.

"Just as workers need our own unions on the job to fight for better wages and conditions, we also need our

own political party, a labor party," Kennedy said, "to fight for the social needs of the entire working class, and all those oppressed and exploited by capital. Such a party can mobilize working people to contend against capitalist exploitation, oppression and wars. It can lead a fight to take political power out of their hands and establish a workers and farmers government."

Protests hit Akron killing

Continued from front page

all curfews to be lifted and an end to the city's efforts to blame Jayland for the horrific and unjustified shooting that took his life."

"Protesters shouldn't be going around tearing stuff up either," Pastor Robert DeJournett of the St. Ashworth Temple of the Church of God in Christ said at the press conference. "The police department should be acting in a nonviolent way as well."

Police had stopped Walker for a minor traffic violation, but say he drove off and fired a shot from his car. At the end of a seven-minute police pursuit, they say he exited the car wearing a ski mask and tried to run away. Police claim they opened fire when he turned toward them and made a motion toward his waist. They kept firing even as he lay on the ground.

Police admit he was unarmed when he was killed. An unloaded gun, a bullet magazine and a wedding ring were found in the car. He was handcuffed behind his back, as he lay there dying.

"He was running away!" Clinton Rogers, a retired United Auto Workers union member, told the *Militant* July 6. "That is a lot of shots for someone who had never been in trouble with the law. I would like to give the cops the benefit of the doubt, but really!"

Rogers said, "It's a ploy they claim he was reaching for something. Cops say that all the time."

Protests began after Walker was killed, and increased when body camera footage was released July 3. That evening some who joined the protests vandalized stores and vehicles in the downtown area. The next day the mayor imposed a curfew, which is now in place from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. daily.

"Violence in the streets will accomplish nothing and will only bring more anguish to our community," the family said. Despite subsequent protests being overwhelmingly peaceful, police have fired tear gas and beaten some demonstrators.

Police say that Walker had fled a traffic stop by police in New Franklin the night before he was killed. Friends and family members say that Walker's actions were unusual for him. Walker, who had worked recently for DoorDash, was deeply affected by the death of his fiancé in a traffic accident the month before.

DiCello told reporters, "At this point in the investigation there is no explanation" for Walker's behavior the last two days of his life. The family wants to know what happened, and seek justice for the excessive police response that led to the death of their son.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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